ESTHER,

AN

ORATORIO,

OR,

SACRED DRAMA;

With the LAST IMPROVEMENTS

By *Mr. HANDEL;*

As it is perform'd at the

THEATRE ROYAL in COVENT-GARDEN.

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Dramatis Perſonæ.

AHASUERUS.

ESTHER.

First ISRAELITE Woman, Confident to ESTHER.

MORDECAI.

First ISRAELITE.

Second ISRAELITE.

HAMAN.

HABDONAH.

CHORUS of ISRAELITES.

CHORUS of PERSIAN OFFICERS.

42
9. 20
123

ESTHER, an ORATORIO.

OR,

SACRED DRAMA.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

ESTHER, MORDECAI, and CHORUS of ISRAELITES.

ISRAELITE WOMAN.

RECITATIVE *accompany'd.*

BREATHE ſoft ye Gales, ye Rills in Silence roll,
And heav'nly Peace reſide in *Eſther's* Soul.

AIR.

Watchful Angels, let her ſhare
Your indulgent, daily Care.

ESTHER.

RECIT.

O! King of Kings, celeſtial Lord!
Whoſe Works our Admiration raiſe,
With Rapture ſhall my Lips record,
Thy Majeſty's immortal Praiſe. *Hallelujah.*

SCENE II.

HAMAN, HABDONAH, and OFFICERS.

HABDONAH.

RECIT.

'Tis greater far to ſpare, than to deſtroy.

HAMAN.

I'll hear no more, it is decreed,
All the Jewiſh Race ſhall bleed.
Hear and obey, what *Haman's* Voice commands:
Hath not the Lord of all the Eaſt,
Giv'n all his Pow'r into my Hands?
Hear all ye Nations far and wide,
Which own our Monarch's Sway,
Hear and obey.

AIR.

Pluck Root and Branch from out the Land,
Shall I the God of Iſrael *fear?*
Let Jewiſh Blood dye ev'ry Hand,
Nor Age, nor Sex I'll ſpare.
Raze, raze, their Temples to the Ground,
And let their Place no more be found.

OFFICER.

Our Souls with Ardour glow,
To execute the Blow.

CHORUS.

Shall we the God of Iſrael *fear?*
Nor Age, nor Sex we'll ſpare.
Pluck Root and Branch from out the Land.

SCENE

SCENE III.

ISRAELITES.

Jeruſalem no more ſhall mourn,
In ſad Captivity forlorn:
The righteous God, in whom we truſt,
Will be propitious to the Juſt.
To rapture then your Voices raiſe,
And change your Sighs to Songs of Praiſe.

ISRAELITE WOMAN.

AIR.

Tune your Harps to chearful Strains,
Moulder idols into Duſt;
Great Jehovah *lives and reigns,*
We in great Jehovah *truſt.* DA CAPO.

AIR.

Praiſe the Lord with chearful Noiſe,
Wake my Glory, wake my Lyre;
Praiſe the Lord each mortal Voice;
Praiſe the Lord ye heav'nly Choir.
Zion *now her Head ſhall raiſe,*
Tune your Harps to Songs of praiſe. DA CAPO.

CHORUS.

Shall we of Servitude complain,
The heavy Yoke and galling Chain?

SCENE IV.

MORDECAI.

RECIT.

How have our Sins provok'd the Lord!
Wild perſecution hath unſheath'd the Sword,
Haman hath ſent forth his Decree;
The Sons of *Iſrael* all
Shall in one Ruin fall.
Methinks I hear the Mother's Groans,
While Babes are daſh'd againſt the Stones.
I hear the Infant's ſhriller Screams,
Stabb'd at the Mother's Breaſt,
Blood ſtains the Murderer's Veſt,
And thro' the City flows in Streams.

AIR.

O Jordan, Jordan, *ſacred Tide!*
Shall we no more behold thee glide
The fertile Vales along,
As in our great forefather's Days?
Shall not thy Hills reſound thy Praiſe,
And learn our holy Song. DA CAPO.

CHORUS.

Ye Sons of Iſrael *mourn,*
Ye never to your Country ſhall return.

END of the Firſt ACT.

ACT

ACT II.

SCENE I.

ESTHER and CHORUS of ISRAELITES.

CHORUS.

TYRANTS may a while preſume,
They never ſhall receive their Doom;
But they ſoon ſhall trembling know,
Stern Juſtice ſtrikes the ſureſt Blow.

SCENE II.

MORDECAI, ESTHER.

ESTHER.

RECIT.

Why ſits that Sorrow on thy Brow?
Why is thy rev'rend Head
With mournful Aſhes ſpread?
Why is that humble Sackcloth worn;
Speak, *Mordecai*, my Kinſman, Friend;
Speak, and let *Eſther* know
Why all this ſolemn Woe.

MORDECAI.

One fate involves us all:
Haman's Decree,
To ſtrike at me,
Hath ſaid, that ev'ry Jew ſhall fall:
Go ſtand before the King with weeping Eye.

ESTHER.

Who goes unſummon'd, by the Laws ſhall die.

MORDECAI.

Haſte to the King, his Mercy crave,
Truſt to th' Almighty, and be brave.
Why wer't thou rais'd to *Perſia's* Throne?
Not for thy Sake alone.

MORDECAI.

Dread not righteous Queen the Danger,
Love will pacify his Anger;
Fear is due to God alone:
Follow great Jehovah's *calling,*
For thy Kindred's Safety falling;
Death is better than a Throne. DA CAPO.

ESTHER.

RECIT.

I go, the Power of Grief to prove;
O! may that Grief Compaſſion move.

AIR.

Tears aſſiſt me, Pity moving,
Juſtice cruel Fraud reproving;
Hear, O God! thy Servant's Prayer:
Is it Blood that muſt atone?
Take, O take my Life alone,
And thy choſen People ſpare!

CHORUS.

ANTHEM.

As Pants the Hart for cooling Streams,
So longs my Soul for thee, O God!

SOLO.

SOLO.

Tears are my daily Food,
While thus they ſay,
Where is now thy God.

SOLO.

Now, when I think thereupon, I pour out my Heart by myſelf;
For I went with the Multitude, and brought them forth into the Houſe of God.

CHORUS.

In the Voice of Praiſe and Thankſgiving, among ſuch as keep Holy-day.

DUET.

Why ſo full of Grief, O my Soul: why ſo diſquieted within me?

CHORUS.

Put thy Truſt in God, for I will Praiſe him.

SCENE IV.

AHASUERUS, ESTHER, and CHORUS of ISRAELITES.

AHASUERUS.

Who dares intrude into our Preſence
Without our Leave!
It is decreed,
He dies for this audacious Deed.
Hah! *Eſther* there!
The Law condemns, but Love will ſpare.

ESTHER.

My Spirits ſink, alas! I faint.

AHASUERUS.

Ye Pow'rs! what Paleneſs ſpreads her beauteous Face!
Eſther awake, thou faireſt of thy Race;
Awake and live, 'tis my Command,
Behold the golden Sceptre in my Hand!
Sure Sign of Grace;
The bloody ſtern Decree
Was never meant, my Queen, to ſtrike at thee.

ESTHER.

DUET.

Who calls my parting Soul from Death?

AHASUERUS.

Awake, my Soul, my Life, my Breath,

ESTHER.

Hear my Suit, or elſe I die.

AHASUERUS.

Aſk, my Queen, can I deny?

SONG.

O beauteous Queen, uncloſe thoſe Eyes,
My faireſt ſhall not bleed:
Hear Love's ſoft Voice that bids thee riſe,
And bids thy Suit ſucceed.
Aſk, and 'tis granted from this Hour,
Who ſhares our Heart, ſhall ſhare our Power.

AHA-

AHASUERUS.

RECIT.

If I find Favour in thy Sight,
May the great Monarch of the Eaſt
Honour my Feaſt,
And deign to be his Servant's Gueſt;
The King and *Haman* I invite.

AHASUERUS.

AIR.

How can I ſtay when Love invites!
I come my Queen to chaſte Delights.
With Joy, with Pleaſure, I obey;
To thee I give the Day.

DA CAPO.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV. Manent ISRAELITES.

Firſt ISRAELITE.

With inward Joy his Viſage glows,
He to the Queen's Apartment goes.
Beauty hath his Fury charm'd,
And all his Wrath diſarm'd.

AIR.

Heav'n has lent her ev'ry Charm
Riſing Fury to diſarm.
And the Monarch's Breaſt will prove,
That each Paſſion yields to Love.

CHORUS.

CHORUS.

ANTHEM.

The King ſhall rejoice in thy ſtrength, O Lord!
Exceeding glad ſhall he be of thy Salvation.

DUET and CHORUS.

His Honour is great in thy Salvation:
Glory and great Worſhip ſhall thou lay upon him.

CHORUS.

We will rejoice in thy Salvation, and triumph
In the Name of the Lord our God. Hallelujah.

END of the Second ACT.

ACT

ACT III.

SCENE I.

MORDECAI and CHORUS of ISRAELITES.

MORDECAI.

RECIT.

JEHOVAH, crown'd with Glory bright,
Surrounded with eternal Light,
Whoſe Miniſters are Flames of Fire,
Ariſe and execute thine Ire.

CHORUS.

He comes! he comes to end our Woes,
And pour his Vengeance on our Foes.
Earth trembles, lofty Mountains nod;
Jacob *ariſe and meet thy God.*

SCENE II.

AHASUERUS.

Now, O Queen, thy Suit declare,
Aſk half my Empire, and 'tis thine.

ESTHER.

O gracious King, my People ſpare,
For in their Lives, you ſtrike at mine;
Reverſe the dire Decree,
The Blow is aim'd at *Mordecai* and Me:

'And is the Fate of *Mordecai* decreed,
Who, when the Ruffian's Sword
Sought to deſtroy my royal Lord,
Brought forth to Light the deſp'rate Deed!

AHASUERUS.

Yes, yes I own, to him alone
I owe my Life and Throne:
Say then, my Queen, who dares purſue
The Life to which Reward is due.

ESTHER.

'Tis *Haman*'s Hate
That ſign'd his Fate.

AHASUERUS.

I ſwear by yon bright Globe of Light,
Which rules the Day,
That *Haman*'s Sight
Shall never more behold the golden Ray!

HAMAN.

AIR.

Turn not, O Queen, thy Face away,
Behold me proſtrate on the Ground!
O ſpeak, his glowing Fury ſtay,
Let Mercy in thy Sight be found.

ESTHER.

AIR.

Flattering Tongue, no more I'll hear thee,
Vain are all thy cruel Wiles;
Bloody Wretch, no more I fear thee,
Vain thy Frowns, and vain thy Smiles.

Tyrant,

Tyrant, when of Pow'r poſſeſs'd;
Now thou trembleſt when diſtreſs'd. DA CAPO.

AHASUERUS.

RECIT.

Guards, ſeize the Traitor, bear him hence;
Death ſhall Reward the dire Offence;
To *Mordecai* be Honour paid;
The Royal Garment bring.
My Diadem ſhall grace his Head;
Let him in Triumph thro' the Streets be led,
Who ſav'd the King.

AHASUERUS.

AIR.

Thro' the Nation he ſhall be
Next in Dignity to me;
All my People ſhall revere
Merit to their Prince ſo dear.
Daily to his honour'd Name,
Incenſe ſhall on Altars flame.

CHORUS.

All applauding Crowds around
Shall his deathleſs Fame reſound.

HAMAN.

AIR.

How art thou fallen from thy Height!
Tremble Ambition at the Sight,
In Pow'r let Mercy ſway,
When adverſe Fortune is thy Lot,
Leſt thou by Mercy be forgot,
And periſh in that Day. DA CAPO.

SCENE

SCENE III.

ISRAELITES with MORDECAI in Triumph.

GRAND CHORUS.

The Lord our Enemy has ſlain;
Hallelujah, Solo.
Ye Sons of Jacob ſing a chearful Strain.
Hallelujah.
Sing Songs of Praiſe, bow down the Knee,
Hallelujah.
The Worſhip of our God is free.
Hallelujah.
For ever bleſſed be his holy Name,
Let Heav'n and Earth his Praiſe proclaim.
Hallelujah.

FINIS.